

Consulting Services for Evaluating Threshold Programs

Background

The MCC Threshold provides financial assistance to eligible countries to assist them in improving policy performance in the areas measured by MCC's policy indicators. Threshold programs largely target anti-corruption and rule of law reforms. The following sectors are typical focus areas of a given threshold program: procurement, law enforcement (police and prosecutors), courts or the judiciary, customs, tax collection, media and civil society, business registration and the legislature. MCC has provided threshold grants to 21 countries amounting to over \$450 million since 2005. Eleven programs will have ended by the end of this calendar year.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), working with MCC, is the primary agency overseeing the implementation of the Threshold Program. Other U.S. agencies – including the Department of Justice and the Department of Treasury –also provide assistance as part of a threshold program.

Objective

The Millennium Challenge Corporation seeks individual consultants to conduct end of program evaluations of threshold programs in sub-Saharan Africa, Central or Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Latin America. MCC will seek assistance in evaluating one or more threshold programs by an individual consultant.

The Consultants will be responsible for collecting and analyzing evidence to assess program effectiveness in achieving both output and outcome-level results. In particular, the following will be addressed:

- Implementation and program results: The consultant will explore the extent to which:
 1. activities were undertaken;
 2. activities were fully implemented;
 3. based on feasibility to evaluate, implemented activities led to the targeted outcomes (or meaningful changes in knowledge, attitudes and practices);
 4. implemented activities and outcomes have been sustained, to date, and the likelihood that they will be continue to be sustained over the short- and long-term; and
 5. the cost-effectiveness of program activities.
- Problem identification: Analyze the logical framework and assess the assumed link between the project inputs, implementation plans, and expected outcomes. The assessment of program design should also review the link between individual projects and country performance on the relevant policy indicators. Since the policy indicators do not lend themselves to cause-effect conclusions on isolated program activities, the objective is to assess the link between threshold program focus and weaknesses revealed by the policy indicators (and *not* to measure the program's precise effect on the policy indicators).

- Lessons learned: What lessons can MCC apply in future programs related to program design and implementation? In addition, a collection of anecdotal evidence from different governments, project implementers, US government partners and other stakeholders' views on the extent to which the timeframe for program implementation and Compact incentive hindered or accelerated policy improvements and implementation of activities.

Tasks

- Meet with MCC, USAID program managers, and implementers to understand design, program theory and collect program details, including program reports.
- Conduct desk review of relevant data and identify the program logic and the intended links between activities, outcomes, and improvement on MCC policy indicators.
- Create an evaluation design that incorporates the program logic analysis, interviews, evaluation methods and proposed evaluation questions. Prioritize the evaluation focus, where necessary, based on data availability and quality as well as rigor of methodological approaches.
- Travel to program sites to solicit feedback from USAID and government counterparts on important hypotheses to consider and collect project data.
- Conduct data quality checks, per MCC M&E Policy, on data created or used by project implementers, USAID managers, and relevant government offices. Identify other sources of data – from international donors, citizen groups or others – that are relevant to the evaluation questions.
- Consider opportunities to compensate for lack of baseline data and establish a credible counterfactual scenario.
- Design and carry out new data collection, according to the evaluation design. Consolidate and analyze any relevant data.
- Prepare a final Evaluation Report and present findings to MCC and other key stakeholders.

Timing and Deliverables

The periods of performance are:

Base Period: 6 months following contract award (estimated level of effort is 480 hours);

Option Period 1: 12 months

Option Period 2: 12 months

Option Period 3: 12 months

Option Period 4: 12 months

Services will be required on an intermittent basis. There is no guarantee of a minimum number of billable hours, and no guarantee that the government will exercise any option.

The consultant is expected to make an estimated three visits to a program site during the base period. Primary deliverables, following authorization to proceed, include:

- Draft work plan by week two,
- Evaluation and data collection work plan by week four,
- Monthly update by week eight,
- Draft final evaluation report by week 10, and
- Final evaluation report by week 12.

Resources Required

The consultant is expected to provide his/her own office equipment and software for communication and coordination with field offices. The consultant is expected to work from home or an alternative, non-MCC location.

Qualifications of the Consultant

The consultant is expected to have extensive experience conducting evaluations that apply rigorous quantitative and qualitative methods. In addition, the consultant is expected to have experience evaluating complex, multifaceted development projects (preferably democracy or governance projects) under budgetary and calendar constraints. Knowledge of and extensive experience in creating data collection instruments is required. Any direct experience in establishing program counterfactuals is highly desirable.

The consultant must have fluent English capabilities. The ability to communicate effectively and clearly with Anglophone staff in Washington DC is imperative. Experience producing complex reports and analyses in English is essential.

Selection Criteria

1. Higher education focused on quantitative research methods (such as statistics, economics or public policy) and at least 5-7 years experience in experimental or quasi-experimental program evaluation.
2. Experience evaluating institutional, legal, or regulatory reform and/or governance programs.
3. Fluent English is mandatory and should be demonstrated through writing samples (to be provided upon request) relevant to the services sought in this document.
4. Proposed billing rates.
5. Respondents are *requested* to respond to the following scenario with a proposed methodological and data collection approach to evaluating the program. Responses should be included in the cover letter response, which should be no longer than two pages.

The scenario entails a law enforcement capacity building and policy reform program with little project data. Policy reform targets include enabling legislation for financial corruption and money laundering investigations as well as the establishment of a financial intelligence unit. The capacity building efforts support training of 50 prosecutors, 150 police and 100 judges on the legislative changes, case building and case investigation so that they are better equipped to

conduct financial investigations. The program is based in the capital city and supports public servants working directly for government ministries which are based in the capital. Project data is limited primarily to attendance sheets and work plan documents.

Interested parties should submit by email to recruitment@mcc.gov the following package: 1) a resume (5 page limit) and a brief cover letter describing areas of expertise 2) a writing sample, 3) response to the scenario, and 4) proposed consultancy rates on an hourly basis to include salary history during the past 3 years. Please include "Threshold Evaluation" in the subject line of your email. This is an open continuous position.

The MCC is an equal opportunity employer.